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Preventing Nuclear Terrorism

In June, 1993, as detailed in Graham Allison's *Nuclear Terrorism*, the U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan received an urgent phone call. Kazakh security officers had discovered an abandoned warehouse—full of nuclear materials. U.S. experts from the Department of Energy (DOE) found 1,278 pounds of highly enriched uranium in that warehouse, which had been abandoned for several years. The building's security "consisted of a single padlock, which DOE technicians easily removed with an ordinary bolt cutter," writes Allison.

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As George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, and Sam Nunn write in a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, "deterrence is decreasingly effective and increasingly hazardous" because "we face the very real possibility that the deadliest weapons ever invented could fall into dangerous hands." A RAND Corporation study by Roger Molander details the consequences: "few challenges are more demanding...than the challenge posed by a nuclear terrorist attack on one or more major American cities. Any major nuclear or other mass effect terrorist incident will likely have both prompt and prolonged impacts that would severely challenge local, regional, and national response and recovery resources."

Possessing close to 95% of the world's nuclear warheads, the United States and Russia must lead the way in securing the world's nuclear stockpiles. A crucial step to this end will be reducing the stockpiles of both countries, as it is easier to secure fewer weapons. Therefore, along with Congressman James McGovern I have introduced legislation expressing the sense of the House that the United States and Russia should, in cooperation, individually reduce their nuclear stockpiles to 1,000 deployed weapons and 3,000 total by 2015.

A related purpose of the Resolution is to add credibility to the efforts by the United States Government to stifle nuclear proliferation and to persuade other nuclear powers and "would be" nuclear powers to exercise greater restraint concerning their

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nuclear ambitions.

Additionally, the Resolution calls for the enhancement of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (Nunn-Lugar) by an additional \$500 million per year. The Nunn-Lugar program secures and dismantles weapons of mass destruction in former Soviet Union states.

The Resolution would also direct a portion of the savings from stockpile reductions to humanitarian programs. Although the causes of terrorism are complex, the conditions of despair and hunger are breeding grounds for terrorist recruitment. Thus the Resolution such savings to be directed towards funding programs such as Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole International Food For Education And Child Nutrition Program.

Nuclear terrorism is indeed the "ultimate preventable catastrophe." We must act soon to reduce the possibility that such powerful weapons end up in the wrong hands.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Lungren
Member of Congress

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